

JANUARY – JULY
2011



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The cover shows Bhasha Bhavan, the new complex at the National Library.

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Editorial

The National Library has been promising easier and wider access to electronic journals and on-line databases once the ICT infrastructure was in place. We are happy to report that the library has now acquired databases such as Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford Bibliographies On-line and ProQuest Dissertations (Full Texts). We are switching to the electronic version of the latter from the current financial year. It will provide access to 2.7 million searchable citations to dissertation and theses from around the world from 1861 to the present day, together with 1.5 million full-text dissertations and theses. Every year more than 70,000 graduate dissertations are added to the PQDT FT, the majority of which are full-text. The library has also acquired, on a perpetual-access basis, Early English Books On-line. It would enable users to access full texts of nearly 1,25,000 English titles printed between 1475 and 1700 in the British Isles, i.e. the entire lists in A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave's *Short Title Catalogue*, and Donald Wing's *Short-Title Catalogue*. It also includes the Thomason Collection of the Early English Tracts Supplement.

The Web-OPAC now has around 8,50,000 records, including books in foreign languages, bound journals, and maps. We have plans of digitizing select rare and brittle documents starting in the second quarter of the financial year. Stock-taking, a recommendation in the last Performance Audit, has started in the financial year 2011-12 after a gap of many years.

The last semester saw a number of important events, including major exhibitions and conferences. These are reported in the following pages. The most important of these was the widely appreciated exhibition 'Tagoreana in the National Library', which put on public view rare manuscripts and books of Rabindranath Tagore on the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of the poet. We are happy to announce that a checklist of major holdings of English and Bengali books by and on the great scientist Praphullachandra (Prafulla Chandra) Ray will be launched on 2 August 2011, whose 150th birth anniversary falls on that date.

We had also promised programmes relating to staff training and development. These are reported in the ensuing pages, including a major six-day workshop on security and fire prevention held for the first time in the National Library. In July, we shall be conducting a gender sensitization programme for the staff with the assistance of the organization Swayam.

This year marks 175 years of the founding of Calcutta Public Library, the institution with which the National Library started life. We shall observe the occasion throughout the year, the first event being scheduled for 16 July 2011. On that day the noted book historian Professor A. R. Venkatachalapathy of Madras Institute of Development Studies will deliver the first B. S. Kesavan Lecture. We are happy that the lecture, planned as a tribute to the great bibliographer and the first librarian of the National Library in independent India, should co-incide with the 175th anniversary of Calcutta Public Library.

One of the happiest pieces of news that we wish to share is that Professor Gautam Bhadra, Tagore National Fellow for Cultural Research in the library, has been awarded the prestigious Ananda Puraskar for his book *Nyara battalay jay kabar?* (Kolkata: Chhatim, 2011). The book is an important study of popular publications and the culture of reading in Bengal.

Swapan Chakravorty
30 June 2011

**NATIONAL LIBRARY
Government of India
Kolkata**

NEWSLETTER

June 2011

(This number of the *Newsletter* covers the period January 2011 to June 2011.)

150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore
Exhibition

'Tagoreana in the National Library', an exhibition of select books, illustrations, portraits, paintings and manuscripts from the library's collection was held at the Art Gallery, Bhasha Bhavan, from 6 to 20 June 2011. It was curated by Professor Swapan Majumdar, former Director, Ravindra Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, and inaugurated by Sri Jawhar Sircar, IAS, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Culture.



The exhibition displayed a fragment of rare Tagore items, putting on public view important features of the making of Tagore's texts: manuscripts, books, illustrations. The painted and photographed portraits brought out the many moods of the poet at different stages of his life. A select range of books was exhibited to bring out the variety in production across the entire gamut of his publications.

The National Library has a collection of 41 leaves of Tagore manuscripts, almost unknown to his readers. The manuscripts were presented to the library by the Hindusthani Talimi Sangh of Wardha in 1961. Besides the digital versions of the entire collection, some originals were also displayed for the first time. It may be surmised that these were initially collected by Ariam Aryanayakam, an associate of Tagore who later moved to the Gandhi Asrama in Wardha.

Professor Sankha Ghosh, Tagore scholar and poet, Professor Amiya Dev, former Vice

Chancellor, Vidyasagar University, Dr Reba Som, Director, Rabindranath Tagore Centre, ICCR, Sri P. T. Nair, historian and antiquarian, Dr G. Rautela, Director General, National Council of Science Museums, Professor Partha Ghose, former Professor of Physics, Visva-Bharati, Professor Sukanta Chaudhuri, Professor Emertius, Jadavpur University and Editor of the Oxford Tagore, Dr Chittaranjan Panda, Curator Victoria Memorial, Sri Subrata Bose, former Member of Parliament, and other dignitaries were present at the inauguration.

National Seminar on 'The Impact of Rabindranath Tagore on Other Indian Literatures'

Rabindranath Tagore's impact on the literatures in other Indian languages (and the transactions of Tagorean art with literatures in other Indian languages) was the theme of a national seminar held at the Bhasha Bhavan auditorium on 20-21 January 2011. The conference was inaugurated by Professor Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, Chairperson, Indian Council of Historical Research, and the keynote address was delivered by Professor Sumatheendra Raghavendra Nadig, former Chairperson, National Book Trust. Dr Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay, Regional Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, and Sri K. K. Banerjee, Director, Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, were guests of honour. The proceedings were circulated with the conference folder. There was a recitation of his poems by Srimati Bratati Bandyopadhyay, a well-known artiste, from *Gitanjali* on the evening of the 20th. An edited version of the papers will be made available soon.

Government of India Celebrations

The Director General attended the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Rabindranath Tagore organized by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, at Vijnan Bhavan, New Delhi, on 7 May 2011. It was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister. Later he participated in the seminar on 'Tagore and Universalism' at Vijnan Bhavan, and delivered the valedictory address. The conference was convened by Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation.

Cultural Programme

A cultural programme was organized on 8 June 2011 at the auditorium in connection with the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. Lopamudra Mitra, Debasis



Raychaudhury and Rohini Rauchaudhuri performed Rabindrasangeet. The Raychaudhuris presented songs of Tagore inspired by Western music. The original songs were also presented, punctuated by excerpts from a film on the subject by Debasis Raychaudhuri. The artistes had presented the programme at a recent festival in Belfast. This was followed by a recital of Tagore songs, with experimental orchestral arrangements, by Lopamudra Mitra, currently one of the most popular singers in West Bengal.

Rabindranath Tagore Bibliographies

A ground list of holdings by and on Rabindranath Tagore at the National Library has been completed under the supervision of the Director General for the compilation of a bibliography that would help in reprinting classic translations and for commissioning new translations in English and other Indian languages. This is part of the 150th anniversary of the poet being celebrated by the Government of India. The project is being led by the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation.

The National Library will release a printed bibliography, listing the books written by and on Rabindranath Tagore in all major Indian languages, and in English, available at the National Library. It will cover approximately 3000 entries in 14 Indian languages (Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Panjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu) and English. It is in an advanced stage of completion, and its release, in partnership with an established publishing house, is expected in September 2011.

Lecture on Rabindranath Tagore's Views on Books and Libraries

On 4 June 2011, Sri Arun Ghosh, eminent scholar and former librarian, Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, and the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta, spoke on 'Rabindranather grantha o granthabhabana'. The event was held at the Conference Hall of Bhasha Bhavan. This number of the *Newsletter* carries an abridged and translated version of the speech.

150th Birth Anniversary of Acharya Praphullachandra Ray

The library celebrated the 150th birth anniversary of Acharya Praphullachandra (Prafulla Chandra) Ray with an exhibition in August last year (reported in the *Newsletter* for the period). This year we have planned a lecture in Bengali on 19 August 2011 at the Conference Hall by Professor Soumyajit Roy of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kalyani, and Changshu Institute of Technology, Jiangsu, China. Professor Roy had been post-doctoral fellow at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, and had worked for his doctoral degree at Universität Bielefeld, Germany. Earlier, he had studied at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, and St Xavier's College, Kolkata. Professor Shyamal Chakraborty, Head of the Chemistry Department, University College of Science and Technology, Calcutta University, will preside.

A checklist of major holdings of English and Bengali books by and on the great scientist will be launched at the Science City Mini Auditorium on 2 August 2011, whose 150th birth anniversary falls on that date. The book contains appendices on the scientist's life and

research papers, and an essay by Dr Biman Nath of the Raman Research Institute, Bengaluru.

175 years of the Foundation of Calcutta Public Library

B. S. Kesavan Lecture

This year happens to be the 175th anniversary of the foundation of Calcutta Public Library, one of the earliest public libraries in the country with which National Library began life. We shall be observing the occasion with a series of events and probable exhibitions and publications. The first such event would be a lecture named after the late B. S. Kesavan, the great bibliographer and the first librarian of the National Library in independent India. Professor A. R. Venkatachalapathy of the Madras Institute of Development Studies, distinguished book historian, will speak on 'Cultures of Copyright: Authors and Publishers in Colonial India' on 16 July 2011 in the Conference Hall. Sri Jawhar Sircar, IAS, Secretary to the Government India, Ministry of Culture, will preside.

Major Projects

Stock Verification

A tender was floated on 3 March 2011 and the Expert Committee scrutinized the quotations on 15 March 2011. The library received revalidation of expenditure sanction amounting to Rs 30,00,000 from the Ministry of Culture (F.No.12-7/2010-Lib. dated 29 April, 2011). The Stock Verification Division was shifted from the Annexe Building to Bhasha Bhavan in April 2011. The preparatory work for starting the stock verification project through outsourcing was completed in May, and stock-taking started on 14 June 2011.

The job was assigned to Datasoft Computers Pvt. Ltd. The agency would identify damaged and worn-out documents, verify documents not found, physically check the reading materials through Shelf Lists and Stock Registers and periodically submit reports. The stocks to be verified include reading materials purchased, legal deposits, gifts and other items received through cultural exchange, Indian official documents, foreign official documents, maps, manuscripts, special collections, microfilms, microfiches, CD/DVDs and other electronic materials. These also include materials produced by the National Library, including printed publications, microfilms, microfiches, photographs, and CD/DVDs. Unprocessed books would be verified using the Accession Registers. The agency, in the first phase, submitted a report of 1,12,000 records of English books which have been verified by the ALIO (SVD).

Retro-conversion of Bibliographical Records

The Retro-conversion project was facing problems because of depletion of outsourced workers for validation after a number of them completed 210 days in service in the calendar year 2010. As decided at the Advisory Board meeting of 8 January 2011, the Review Committee was reconstituted in February. It took charge from 1 April 2011. Dr H. K. Kaul and Sri K. K. Banerjee were inducted as new members.

At the meeting held on 6 April 2011 the reconstituted Committee reviewed the progress of the work and suggested that the agencies should employ professionally qualified persons

to minimize the mistakes while capturing the data, the library would issue new Identity Cards to the outsourced staff engaged, regular interaction would take place between the technical supervisor of each agency and the validators, and data where the errors exceed 10% would be rejected. The target set for the year 2011-12 is 5,40,000, which would complete all the major records stored in cards. The agencies were informed of the new terms.

The library received revalidation of a sum amounting to Rs1,48,07,404 from the Ministry of Culture (F.No.12-10/2005-Lib, dated 4 May, 2011). Data validated by the erstwhile Validation Cell in local discs under report was 12,500. Validation was decentralized, as advised by the Board and Review Committee. The Indian Official Documents Division validated 8030 records, the Foreign Official Documents Division validated 8920 records, the Processing Division validated 21,333 records and the Asutosh Collection validated 2810 records. A total of 3,36,444 records uploaded in the library server.

Enhancement and Upgrade of the ICT System

The library started installation of WiFi cards for upgrade, maintenance and enhancement of existing services of the ICT system. The Wireless Network Interface Card has not been received as yet. In the current financial year, UTM Firewall device will be installed. NICS, the corporate of NIC that supplied all hardware and software components, was expected to supply support manpower for maintaining the system. As NICS refused to provide manpower, the library has been trying to obtain revalidation for Rs 22,50,000 and has applied for manpower to be increased for the current financial year. The library is still receiving support manpower from NICS from the remaining amount of the consolidated fund of the project. The issue has been taken up with the Director General, NIC, Headquarters, and the Managing Director, NICS, New Delhi. Trained support manpower is required for the next one-and-half years to maintain the infrastructure. A meeting of the ICT Advisory committee was held on 17 February 2011 to discuss various ICT related issues of the library. (At the time of going to press, NICS has agreed to continue its manpower support until the end of the calendar year.)

Digitization

During the last week of February 2011 a tender was issued for the digitization of 20,00,000 pages of old, rare and fragile documents of the library. The Expert Committee met in April 2011, evaluated the tender and selected the vendor. The proposal was sent to the Ministry of Culture for administrative approval and financial sanction in the first week of June 2011.

Microfilming of Newspapers

DPS Micrographics Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata, was awarded the contract for the work of microfilming of rare, old and brittle newspapers. However, CPWD (Electrical) has not completed its work on the rooms earmarked for Reprography and Microform Library.

Backlog of Unaccessioned and Unprocessed Books

19,784 unaccessioned and unprocessed Indian-language books were accessioned and processed through outsourcing during the period up to March 2011. The library is yet to get the necessary administrative approval and expenditure sanction for the next financial year.

Rapid Conversion of Card Catalogues Project

All Indian-language and English books (around 8,00,000) were uploaded on the Web-OPAC under the RCCC project by 31 December 2010. During the period from January to March 2011, books in foreign languages, bound periodicals in English and maps were scanned and converted into the specified format. The number of records captured and converted is around 80,000. Most of these have been uploaded in the library website.

Collection Development

On-line Databases

The library subscribed to two new on-line databases, Oxford English Dictionary and Oxford Bibliography On-line. The OED is based on historical principles which provide users with information on the semantic evolution of words. The dictionary allows users to move from glosses to head-words. Oxford Bibliography On-line (OBO) has been taken on a perpetual-access basis. OBO would enable the library to provide answers to the many bibliographic queries that are received. The library procured the database on a perpetual-access basis.

Users would also be able to access Early English Books On-line (EEBO), which contains all 1,25,000 English titles printed between 1475 and 1700 in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, i.e. the entire lists in A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave's *Short Title Catalogue*, Donald Wing's *Short-Title Catalogue* including the entire Thomason Collection of Early English Tracts Supplement. The EEBO would make research on a range of subjects in the early modern period without having to make expensive trips to libraries in the West.

ProQuest Dissertation Theses-Full Text, containing 2.7 million searchable citations to dissertations and theses from around the world from 1861 to the present day together with 1.5 million full text dissertations, has also been acquired in electronic form. These electronic resources would be an invaluable addition to the library.

On-line Journals

Three new on-line journal packages have been introduced in January 2011. The library has subscribed to Indian journals.com (more than 145 journals), Springer's Computer Science package (more than 100 journals), and Emerald's Knowledge Management and Library and Information Science package (32 titles). The library currently provides access to over 6000 on-line journals.

A meeting of the On-line Resource Procurement Committee was held on 22 February 2011

to suggest and decide on subscription and purchase of new on-line resources. A user-training programme was conducted through the Oxford University Press on 20 May 2011 to make the users acquainted with the use of the Oxford Bibliographies On-line and Oxford English Dictionary. A series of such programmes has been planned.

New Books

The library purchased around 1300 books, predominantly on economics and psychology selected by experts from publishers' catalogues. The library for the first time procured pre-selected books. It procured 830 dissertations published by UMI on various topics on India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. These dissertations were awarded doctoral degrees by various universities of North America.

The library collected more than 1700 books (Bengali, English, Hindi and Urdu) under the Delivery of Books Act from the Kolkata Book Fair (26 January-4 February 2011). 3632 books in Indian languages including English (1455) were collected under the Delivery of Books Act. Apart from these, 1024 and 648 books and documents received through the Gift and Exchange and Foreign Official Documents Division.

Gifts

The following are some of important gifts received and offered during the period:

Manuscripts of Rabindranath Tagore

Sri A. Balasubramaniam donated one manuscript leaf of Rabindranath Tagore to the library on 9 June 2011. The size of the paper manuscript is 18 cm x 22 cm. The paper manuscript was in bad shape. The Laboratory Division successfully restored the manuscript.

Collection of Sukumar Sen

The library has been gifted the valuable manuscripts and books in the collection of the late scholar Professor Sukumar Sen stored in his Bardhaman residence.

Amlan Datta Papers

In a letter dated 21 February 2011, Professor Kitty Scoular Datta, widow of the late Professor Amlan Datta, economist and philosopher, has gifted the library his private papers for creating an archive.

Collection of Jayantanuja Bandyopadhyaya

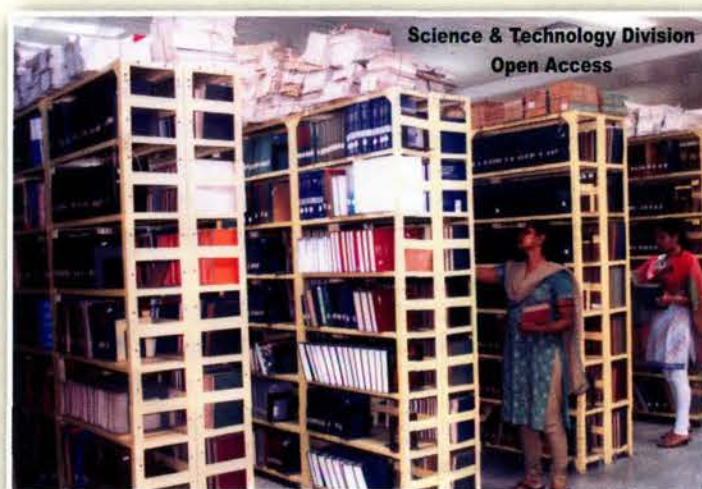
Professor Kalyani Bandyopadhyaya has donated about 500 books of the late Professor Jayantanuja Bandyopadhyaya. The collection has been procured and listed.

Manuscript in Birch Bark

We had reported the receipt of the gift of a manuscript of the *Skandapurana* from Srimati Asima Goswami of Srirampur in an earlier number of the *Newsletter*. The Laboratory Division reports that it is in birch bark, the first such manuscript to have been acquired by the National Library.

Science and Technology

About 4% of the total publications purchased every year are on scientific and technical subjects. The library is also receiving publications on science and technology under the Delivery of Books Act and through Gift and Exchange programmes. A sizeable portion of science and technology publications are received from various foreign governments. At present, around 20,000 reference books on science and technology and 400 titles of Indian and foreign journals are available in the Division.



Of late, the library has increased subscription to on-line science journals. Nearly 850 on-line journals are available. The Science and Technology Division is the only Division in the library which provides open access to its collection. The Division shall have to improve its resources in many emerging areas, including energy, environment, health care and digital technologies.

Children's Library

16 VCDs and 18 DVDs of children's films in various languages have been bought for the Children's Library. The library will arrange for regular screening of these films for children's groups, so that this portion of the library becomes a lively activity centre. The first such show will be held on 26 August 2011 for students of Chetla Boys' School. Raja Sen's film *Damu*, which won the national award for best children's film in 1997, will be screened. The writer for children, Sailen Ghosh, winner of Sangeet Natak Akademi prize, Nehru Fellowship, and the Mouchak award, will speak to the young spectators on the value of reading and libraries.

Major Conferences and Workshops

Collaborative Workshop with the British Library

A workshop on 'Early Bengali Printed Materials 1778-1914: Digitization and Research' was

held on 6-7 January 2011 at the Conference Hall, Bhasha Bhavan. It was organized by the National Library, Kolkata, in collaboration with the British Library, London. This was the first workshop conducted between cultural institutions of the two countries after the signing of the Cultural Memorandum of Understanding in July 2010.



The workshop was inaugurated by Sri A. R. Bandyopadhyay, Chairperson, Advisory Board, National Library. The delegates from the British Library were Dr Joanna Newman, Head, Higher Education, Dr Oliver Urquhart Irvine, Head of Asian and African Studies, and Ms Caroline Mitford, Curator, South Asian Studies. Scholars and professionals from the UK and India participated in the workshop, and most libraries in India that had holdings relating to early Bengali printed materials were represented.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK, supported independent scholars from the UK, while the National Library, assisted by the School of Cultural Texts and Studies, Jadavpur University, co-ordinated Indian scholars and experts drawn from such institutions as the Asiatic Society, Bangiya Sahitya Parishat, Carey Library (Srirampur), Uttarpada Jaykrishna Public Library, Rabindra Bharati University, Raj Bhavan Library, National Council of Education Bengal, Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore, INFLIBNET, and Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta.

Together these institutions and scholars represent the bulk of the expertise and resources available on the subject. Apart from the representatives of the two libraries, the workshop had eminent professionals such as Dr Fiona Ross of the University of Reading, Professor Tim Hitchcock of the University of Hertfordshire, Professor Shearer West of the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK, Dr Paul Vetch of King's College, London, Dr Ananya Kabir of the University of Leeds, Dr Nandini Das of the University of Liverpool, Dr Annu Jalais of the London School of Economics, Dr Ian Anderson of the University of Glasgow, Professor Margot Finn of the University of Warwick, Dr Anindita Ghosh of Manchester University, Professor Gautam Bhadra, Tagore National Fellow for Cultural Research, National Library, Professor Sukanta Chaudhuri and Professor Amlan Das Gupta of the School of Cultural Texts and Records, Jadavpur University, Professor Tejaswini Niranjana

of Centre for Study in Culture and Society (CSCS), Bangalore, Professor Asis Rajadhyaksha of CSCS, Dr Lakshmi Arya of CSCS, Dr Jagdis Arora of INFLIBNET, Dr Nandini Chatterjee of Plymouth University, Dr Padmini Murray of the University of Stirling, Professor Swapan Basu of Bangiya Sahitya Parishat, and archivists and librarians of all major libraries in and around with substantial holdings of early printed Bengali materials.

The deliberations covered location of resources, bibliographical control, archiving procedures, dissemination, access, technical specifications, and new research possibilities. Most delegates felt that the workshop would lead to a collaborative project of digitization of early Bengali printed materials.

The participants were requested to summarize their suggestions and inputs within February 2011 so that a proposal may be drawn up at an early date. The proposal has since been sent to the British Library for its response.

International Workshop on 'Commodities and Culture in the Colonial World, 1851-1914'

The international workshop entitled 'Commodities and Culture in the Colonial World, 1851-1914' conducted by Jadavpur University, King's College (London), University of Technology (Sydney), New York University and Witwatersrand University (South Africa) was held in Kolkata on 12, 13 and 14 January 2011. This is the second workshop in a series being funded by the Leverhulme Trust.



The Kolkata leg of the workshop was organized by Jadavpur University in association with the Victoria Memorial and the National Library. The Conference Hall of Bhasha Bhavan was the venue for the third day. Among the distinguished scholars present at the library were Professor Rajeswari Sunder Rajan of New York University (NYU), Professor Elaine Freedgood of NYU, Professor Toral Gajrawala of NYU, Professor Sukanta Chaudhuri of Jadavpur University (JU), Professor Modhumita Roy of Tufts University, Professor Tilottama Tharoor of NYU, Professor John Plunkett of Exeter University, Professor

Isabel Hofmeyr of Witwatersrand University, Professor Stephen Muecke of the University of New South Wales, Professor Josephine McDonagh of King's College, Professor Clare Pettitt of King's College, Professor Supriya Chaudhuri of JU, Dr Abhijit Gupta of JU, Dr Chandreyee Niyogi of JU, Dr Nilanjana Deb of JU, Dr Rimi B. Chatterjee of JU, Professor Amlan Das Gupta of JU, Professor Margot Finn of the University of Warwick, Dr Ian Anderson of the University of Glasgow, Professor Chandrika Kaul of the University of St Andrews, Professor Rochelle Pinto of the University of Delhi, and Samia Khatun of the University of Technology, Sydney. The library was represented in the deliberations through a presentation made by the Director General entitled 'The Library as Affect'.

International Conference on Digital Library Management

Tata Energy and Resources Institute, New Delhi, and Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata, jointly organized an international conference on 'Digital Library Management' from 11 to 13 January 2011 at Science City Mini Auditorium. The theme of the conference was 'Extending Benefits of Modern Technology to Public, Academic, and Special Libraries'. Ashok K. Nath, LIO, Syed Abuzar ALIO, S Siva Prasad, ALIO, Ashim Mukhopadhyay, ALIO, and Abhijit Roy, LIA were deputed to attend.

Professor Swapan Chakravorty, Director General, chaired the technical session 'Digital Library Services' on 12 January 2011. Professor Chakravorty also spoke at the session 'Digital Initiatives by the Ministry of Culture's Organizations' on 'Digital Initiatives in the National Library, Kolkata: A Case Study'. Ashok K. Nath, LIO (S&T) made a presentation on 'Digital Destruction, Counterfeiting of Intellectual Property and Its Digit-Micro Photo Remedies' on 12 January 2011 at Science City Mini Auditorium.

The conference was attended by Dr T. Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, and Dr P. R. Goswami, Director, Libraries. In the valedictory session on 13 January 2011, Sri Jawhar Sircar, IAS, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Culture, delivered his presidential address. Professor Suranjan Das, Vice Chancellor, Calcutta University, spoke at the session.

52nd Bengal Library Conference

On 4 February 2011, the Bangiya Granthagar Sammelan (52nd Bengal Library Conference) was inaugurated at Triguna Sen Auditorium, Jadavpur University, at 4 p.m.. The conference was organized in collaboration with the National Library and the Raja Rammohan Ray Library Foundation. The National Library hosted a lunch for the Bangiya Granthagar Sammelan at the Amenity Centre, Jadavpur University, on 5 February.

Stake-holders' Meeting on the DB Act

On 25 March 2011 a meeting of stake-holders relating to the proposed revision of the existing Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act was held at the Conference Hall. Among those present were the Joint Secretary Dr T. Kumar, Dr H. Kaul, Director, DELNET, Dr Anjana Chattopadhyay, DG, Delhi Public Library, K. K. Banerjee,

Director, Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, Anand Bhushan, President, Federation of Indian Publishers, B. E. Sananse, Director, State Central Library, Mumbai, Dr. K. K. Kochukoshy, Librarian, Central Reference Library, Dr Ramkumar Mukhopadhyaya, Regional Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, Syed Hyder M. Rizvi, Manager, Sales and Marketing, National Book Trust, Sakti Malik, Director, Delhi Book Fair, Tridib Chattopadhyay, Chairperson, Publishers' and Booksellers' Guild, Kolkata, K. D. Chandola, President, Association of Small and Medium Newspapers of India, Professor Mukul Kesavan, Member, Advisory Board of the National Library, and other representatives of Government departments and publishers' organizations. The meeting was chaired by the DG, National Library. The resolutions and a proposed draft of the revision have been sent to the Ministry.

Training and Outreach Programmes

The Training and HRD Division has been preparing a Staff Development Plan for the year 2011-12. The following is a list of training programmes attended by members of the staff.

- The library deputed Ashok Kumar Nath, LIO (Science and Technology), Md. Usman Ghani, ALIO (Urdu), Kali Charan Gouda, LIA, and Mrinal Kanti Banerjee, LIA, to the workshop on 'Web Technology in Library Services: Focus on Library Blog, RSS Feeds and Podcasting' at National Insurance Academy, held on 24 and 25 January 2011 in Pune. The workshop concentrated on hands-on training. B. J. Sane, Chief Librarian, took Podcasting classes, Bhakti Gole, Librarian, classes on Blog, and Namrata Shindhe classes on RSS Feed. The interactive session was chaired by the Director, Dr Prathap Oburai.
- A workshop on 'Transformational Leadership Programme for Library and Information Service Professionals' organized by NASSDOC and held at ICSSR, New Delhi, was held from 7 to 11 February 2011. The workshop was especially designed to combine management aspects and information service with emphasis on the working environment, problems at the workplace and resource management in the context of LIS professionals. The course director was Professor J. K. Mitra, Faculty of Management Studies, Delhi University. Ashim Mukhopadhyay, ALIO, attended the workshop.
- The National Institute of Fashion Technology organized an international conference in collaboration with the Art Libraries Section of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions from 15 to 17 February 2011 at the India International Centre, New Delhi. This was the first conference in the series titled 'International Conference on the Convergence of Libraries, Archives and Museums'. The conference offered a forum to discuss the theme of empowerment of users from multiple perspectives, ranging from user interface technologies to empowerment of disadvantaged user communities. Library professionals and conservators, users of open source and of commercial software discussed the issue of empowerment related to affordability and sustainability of digital technologies. Prasenjit Sarkar and Syamalkanti Biswas, both LIAs, were deputed to attend the conference.
- Dr R. Ramachandran, PLIO (I), H. P. Gedam, PLIO (II), Jagmal Singh, LIO (IV)

attended the workshop on Results-Framework Document (RFD) on 22 February 2011 at Vijnan Bhavan, New Delhi. Developing long-term strategy for organizations, performance management of government agencies, result framework management system, and grievance redress mechanism were discussed in the workshop. The Hon'ble Prime Minister approved the outline of a Performance Monitoring and Evaluation System for government departments.

- On 10 March 2011 Malabika Ghosh, ALIO, attended a workshop at Bengal Engineering and Science University on the use of alternative and renewable energy in heritage buildings. One of such project for the Belvedere House prepared by Professor Biswajit Ghosh of Jadavpur University was submitted to the organizers.
- From 22 March to 24 March 2011 S. Siva Prasad, ALIO (Computer), was nominated by the Ministry of Culture to attend the international conference on utilization of the 'Traditional Knowledge Digital Library for Protection of Traditional Knowledge' at New Delhi. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, in collaboration with World Intellectual Property Organization, conducted the seminar.
- Oxford University Press conducted a User Training Programme at the Conference Room on 20 May 2011 for newly acquired Oxford Bibliographies On-line and Oxford English Dictionary On-line databases.
- Seven BLIS students (Session 2010-11) of Burdwan University were imparted training on 'Conservation of Library Documents' by the Laboratory, Preservation and Reprography Divisions on 27 and 28 June 2011.
- A week's training programme was held from 27 June to 2 July, 2011 for the security staff of the library. The workshop was conducted by Tridib K. Biswas, ex-Executive Officer of CISF, and Security Consultant of Se-Cure, Security Consultant Services, and Tapan Debnath, ex-Deputy Commandant and ex-Senior Consultant (Fire and Security), CISF. The topics covered were classes of fire, preventive measures, role of guards, familiarization with fire-fighting equipment, bomb hoaxes, terrorist attacks, checking of ID cards, challans, maintenance of records, frisking, checking of vehicular traffic, communication during a crisis, physical fitness, attitudinal reform, body language and mock-evacuation drills. Debabrata Lahiri, the NSG Commando who was in the rescue operations in the 26/11 incident in Mumbai, and Nurul Anwar, Officer-in-Charge, Alipore Police Station, also spoke at the workshop.
- A gender-sensitization session for the library staff, including the outsourced staff, will be conducted by the organization Swayam at the auditorium on 27 July 2011.

Programmes in the North-Eastern States

Arunachal Pradesh

The library organized a training programme on 'Library Software' in collaboration with the Directorate of Public Libraries, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, from 31 January to 4 February 2011. The programme was inaugurated by Sri S. D. Sarkar, Director, Science and Technology, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, while Sri Pradeep Kumar, senior journalist,

was guest of honour. Dr R. Ramachandran, PLIO, Sukla Saha, ALIO, and Krisanu Chattopadhyay, LIA, attended the programme.

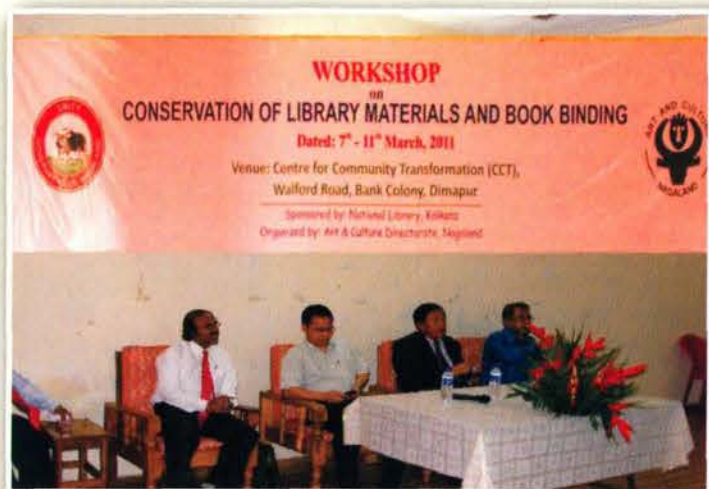


Tripura

The library organized an authors' meet in collaboration with the Government of Tripura, and Birchandra State Central Library at Nazrul Kalakshetra, Agartala, from 19 to 21 February 2011. The programme was inaugurated by Sri Anil Sarkar, Hon'ble Minister of Higher Education, Government of Tripura. Dr R. Ramachandran, PLIO (I), Amita Chattopadhyay, ALIO, and Vinay Kumar, Section Officer, Ministry of Culture, attended the programme. His Excellency the Governor of Tripura Dr D. Y. Patil was the chief guest at the valedictory session.

Nagaland

A workshop - cum - training programme on 'Conservation of Library Materials and



Bookbinding' in collaboration with the Department of Art and Culture, Government of Nagaland, was conducted by the library from 7 to 11 March 2011 at the Centre for Community Transformation, Dimapur. Nine preservation experts, Sanjay Maity and P. K. Sanyal (LIAs), A. Arumugam, Pulin Behari Sarkar, Dhiren Roy, Sukumar Gayen and Ajoy Kumar Ray (LCs) and Rita Saha from the Laboratory and Preservation Divisions, were deputed to impart training on conservation and binding under the leadership of Ashok K. Nath, LIO. 35 library professionals from different libraries in Nagaland including students of Library Science participated in the workshop. Training on preventive, curative, restorative, physical and reproductive conservation of books, manuscripts, non-book and non-print materials (microfilm, microfiche) were part of the course.

Another training workshop was held in June 2011 on 'Application of Computer, and Softwares in Libraries' in Mokokochung, Nagaland.

Assam

The library organized a national seminar on 'Networking of Library and Information Centres of North East India in Digital Environment' in collaboration with the National Institute of Technology at Silchar from 21 to 23 March 2011. Dr R. Ramachandran, PLIO (I) and H. P. Gedam, PLIO (II) attended the programme. The technical sessions included themes such as networking of educational and research institutions of North-Eastern India, HRD issues, impact of ICT and e-resources on library and information centres, open access, resource sharing, and library consortia. About 40 technical papers were presented.

Exhibitions

Portraits of Rabindranath Tagore and Translations of his Works in Other Indian Languages
Apart from the major exhibition entitled 'Tagoreana in the National Library' (see above), the library organized an exhibition of portraits of Tagore and translations of his works in other Indian languages in the display space next to the auditorium to coincide with the national seminar on 'The Impact of Rabindranath Tagore on Other Indian Literatures' held on 20-21 January 2011. There were 52 portraits and a selection of 106 works by the poet in other Indian languages. The exhibition was inaugurated on 20 January 2011 by Sri A. R. Bandyopadhyay, Chairperson, Advisory Board. The cultural organization Jorasanko Biswa Mahamanab Charcha Kendra assisted in collecting the portraits.

The Book as Commodity and Affect

An exhibition entitled 'The Book as Commodity and Affect' was mounted at the Old Annexe Building to coincide with the international workshop on 'Commodities and Culture in the Colonial World, 1851-1914'. It was visited by most delegates at the workshop.

Tagore Pavilion in Kolkata Book Fair

From 26 January to 4 February 2011, the library took part in the Kolkata Book Fair by providing reproductions of 22 title pages and covers for the Tagore Pavilion of the Kolkata Publishers' and Booksellers' Guild.

Books by and on Mirza Ghalib

On 15 February 2011 a display of books by and on Mirza Ghalib was held at the Indian

Writers' Gallery in the Main Reading Room.

State Science and Technology Congress

The library participated in the science exhibition in the 18th State Science and Technology Congress on the eve of National Science Day from 28 February to 1 March 2011 at Ramakrishna Mission Residential College, Narendrapur. The exhibition was organized in collaboration with the West Bengal Council of Science and Technology. The library set up a stall to exhibit science related books and journals, on-line science journals, conservation and preservation techniques, displayed photographs of the Laboratory and Reprography Divisions and of microphotography and binding equipment, and put on view National Library publications. More than 100 visitors visited the stall. Ashok K. Nath, LIO (Science and Technology), B. Nageswara Rao, ALIO, S. K. Maity, LIA (Lab), and Salini Ved Prakash, LIA (Exhibition) participated in the exhibition. Ashok K. Nath made a presentation signifying the digital dilemma in cybernetic information transformation through digitization to ensure conservation of intellectual property in the 'Computer Science and Information Technology' session of the Science Congress on 1 March 2011.

Treasures of Ancient China

An exhibition entitled 'Treasures of Ancient China' is now touring the country. It is being hosted by the Archaeological Survey of India under the auspices of the Indian Ministry of Culture, the State Administration of China, and Art Exhibitions China. The exhibition was opened at the National Museum, New Delhi, in February 2011, and will be inaugurated at the Belvedere House, National Library, Kolkata, by His Excellency the Governor of West Bengal on 8 September 2011. It will arrive in Kolkata after travelling to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalay, Mumbai, and the Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad. The display of Chinese materials will be on an unprecedented scale, covering implements and artefacts from the neolithic age to the twentieth century. The exhibition will offer the library an opportunity to allow citizens a glimpse into the partially restored Belvedere House. The exhibition will remain open until 7 November 2011.

Chinese Books in the Library



On the occasion of the exhibition 'Treasures of Ancient China', the library hopes to put together a minor display of its Chinese collection that is now being looked after by Sailen K. Pal, ALIO. The library possesses a few rare classics purchased in 1954 by the then Indian Ambassador to China, K .M. Pannikkar. The old Chinese collection of over 15,000 titles, kept in traditionally bound boxes, contain records and annals such as Si Bu Zhen Ben, Qing Shi Kao, Si Bu Cong Kan, Da Qing Shi Lu, Song Qi Sha Cang Jing, Ming Shi Lu, and Bu Qian Yao. These are written in old classical Chinese characters that may be deciphered by only a few trained scholars. At present, the principal source of acquiring Chinese books is the exchange programmes with major institutions in the Peoples' Republic of China. A few books in Chinese published in India are acquired under the Delivery of Books Act.

In addition, there are a few substantial gifts such as those of V. Siddhartha Charry, Consul General of India in Shanghai (made in January 1958), the more than 300 books presented in 1982 by Professor R. M. Bose of Calcutta University, the gift from the Chinese delegation from the Library of National Minorities, Beijing which visited the library in 1989 and which presented a valuable edition of the *Golden Manuscript of Tibetan Canon*, or the '*Bstan-Vgur*' or the Tibetan *Abhidharma* of *Tripitaka* in Tibetan in hundred volumes. The latter was compiled for the first time in the thirteenth century and is an important source for studying Tibetan Buddhism.

Besides, there are some notable collections of modern Chinese writers such as Lu Xun, Guo Mo Ro, Qu Qiu Bai, Wen Yi Duo and Mao Ze Dong. The library very recently received the 'Library of Chinese Classics' in forty volumes. There are also dictionaries and primers. Readers will have an opportunity to sample a cross-section of these books during the upcoming 'Treasures of Ancient China' exhibition.

Minor Publications

The major publications on Rabindranath Tagore and Praphullachandra Ray that have been planned are reported above. There have been a few minor publications during the period:

- The *Newsletter* for the period July- December 2010.
- A *Reader's Guide to the National Library* to be distributed to all new members.
- All members of the staff have been provided with a Diary for 2011 with important contact information and space for entering records of daily work.

Conservation and Reprography

Conservation Service for S. N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences

S. N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences, Kolkata, sought assistance of the Laboratory Division on 29 March 2011 for conservation of 37 brittle and worm-eaten books. The books have been repaired, and microfilm copies have been retained.

Hybrid Microfilm Camera

A Zeuschel Omnia OK 300 Microfilm Camera has been installed in March 2011 that would enable microfilming and digitizing at the same time.

Microform Library

A Microform Library with modern amenities of international standards has been completed for preserving microfilms, microfiches and other electronic storage materials.

Miscellaneous Events

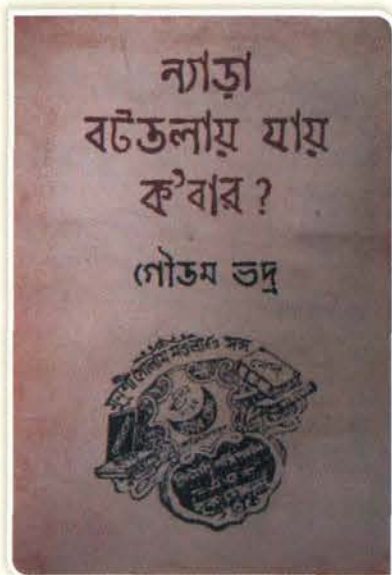
World Book Day

World Book Day was observed by the library and the Central Reference Library in the Conference Room of Bhasha Bhavan on 26 April 2011. Professor Gautam Bhadra spoke on 'Books, a Reader, and the National Library: Fragments of a Reader's Experience'. Dr K. K. Kochukoshy, Librarian, Central Reference Library, and Professor Swapan Chakravorty, Director General, National Library, also spoke on the occasion.

UNESCO Representative List for Intangible Cultural Heritage

From 21 March to 25 March 2011, Asesh Ghatak, LIO (I), attended a workshop at the Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA), Delhi, along with two scholars from the School of Cultural Texts and Records, Jadavpur University. The workshop was on the Ministry of Culture's short-list for inscription on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. 'Durga Puja in West Bengal' was short-listed from the nominations made by the National Library. The job of preparing the dossier, together with a 10-minute video film was entrusted to the School of Cultural Texts and Records, Jadavpur University. The dossier and film were revised at the workshop under the guidance of editors appointed by SNA. The SNA has sent the dossier and the film to the UNESCO.

Award for Professor Gautam Bhadra



Professor Gautam Bhadra, Tagore National Fellow for Cultural Research at the National Library, received the prestigious Ananda Puraskar on 30 April 2011 for his book *Nyara battalay jay kabar?* (Kolkata: Chhatim, 2011).

Annual Sports

On 15 February 2011 the annual sports of the library was held at which many members of the staff participated. Children of staff members also took part. Prizes were given away in the evening.

Republic Day

Republic Day was observed in the library on 26 January 2011. The Director General hoisted the national flag, and took the salute at the parade of the security guards. Sweets were distributed to children who came mostly from the staff quarters.

Eminent Visitors

In addition to the delegates at the various conferences listed above, there were other eminent visitors to the library during the period.

On 2 February 2011 Manlio Argueta, Director, Biblioteca Nacional de El Salvador, visited the library. He gifted the library a signed copy of his novel *Un día en la Vida* (1980; San Salvador: UCA Editores, 2010). He showed particular interest in the conservation practices followed by the library.

On 2-3 February 2011, the eminent photographer Dayanita Singh shot at the library for her forthcoming series of photographs titled 'The Great Indian Archive'.

On 25 February 2011 Klaus Kempf, Leitender Bibliotheksdirektor, Leiter Bestandsaufbau und Erschließung, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München, visited the library and gifted the book *Die Worte des Buddha in den Sprachen der Welt* (München: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2005).

On 6 March 2011 Dan Rhatigan, eminent typographer, graphic designer and Senior Type Designer, Monotype Imaging, visited the Library. Born close to New York City, Rhatigan was trained in typeface design at the University of Reading and now lives in London. Rhatigan was accompanied by the typographer Erin Laughlin. They were particularly impressed by the library's collection of Indian manuscripts and early printed Indian books.

Lea Giles-Peters, State Librarian, State Library of Queensland, Australia, visited the library on 30 May 2011.

Professor Anupam Madhukar, Professor of Physics, Biomedical Engineering and Materials Science, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, visited this library on 31 May 2011.

Professional Committee

The fifth meeting of the Professional Committee was held on 13 April 2011. A few

resolutions concerning programmes to celebrate 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore and 175 years of Calcutta Public Library were adopted in the meeting

Accounts

Expenditure during the period up to 30 June 2011	Plan: Sanctioned (Rs 15,00,00,000)	Non-Plan: Sanctioned B.E. (Rs 23,60.00,000)
	Rs. 1,29,52,106	Rs. 5,53,24,309

Security

A training programme for the security staff has been reported above (under **Training and Outreach Programmes**). In addition, there were other initiatives undertaken by the Security Division.

Fire Security

On 3 February 2011, Sri Asis Dasgupta, Inspector of Fire Prevention Wing, West Bengal Fire and Emergency Services, visited the library and inspected the fire prevention and fire-fighting arrangements at Bhasha Bhavan. This was subsequent to the Director General's visit to the headquarters of the services in November 2011 with a request for an inspection. The Inspector suggested immediate submission of the Key Plan, Site Plan, Floor Plan, Section, Elevation and Roof Plan, and floor-wise and block-wise Area Statement. The Civil and Electrical wings of the CPWD have been urged to make necessary arrangements for submitting these plans to the Director General, West Bengal Fire and Emergency Services. Fire security is supposed to be under the care of the CPWD (Electrical), which has remained unresponsive to repeated requests for inspections, demonstrations and drills.

Inspection by National Security Guard and Special Action Force of Kolkata Police

The National Security Guard and Kolkata Police Special Action Force were contacted by the Security Officer to monitor the security arrangements of the library and for advice on effective prevention of terrorist attacks. The officials on visit expressed happiness at the library's awareness of the necessity of preventive security measures. The available building plans were handed over to them on their request.

Closed Circuit Television

The CPWD failed to meet the deadline regarding the installation of CCTV for the second year running. The latest position is that Panorama & Co. has been awarded the contract and work has started at Bhasha Bhavan. A team of the Special Task Force of Kolkata Police visited the library on 7 June and 20 June 2011 and the strategic sites have been video-taped. Locations have been earmarked at the request of the CPWD (Electrical) for the installation.

Establishment

Appointment

Smitanjali Panda was appointed to the post of Library and Information Assistant through Staff Collection Commission. Virupax Hadapad has been appointed to the post of Library and Information Assistant (Kannada; temporary) with effect from 21 March 2011 (through Staff Selection Commission).

Promotions

Three Lower Division Clerks were promoted to the post of Assistants: Ranthu Edwin Tigga, Kalipada Das and Dipak K. Majumder.

Sankar Kadambanshi, Assistant, has been promoted to the post of Senior Assistant (ad-hoc).

Basudev Sardar, Senior Assistant, has been promoted to the post of Superintendent (ad-hoc).

Three Library Clerks have been promoted to the post of Library and Information Assistants (Machine Operators): Jyotsna Bhattacharjee, Pulin Bihari Sarkar and Akhatar Hussain. Three Library and Information Assistants, Akhil Chandra Saren, Kali Charan Gouda and Sunita Arora have been promoted to the posts of Assistant Library and Information Officer.

Regularizations

Prasanta Kumar Das and Anandalal Majhi were regularized in the post of Assistant with effect from 27 May 2011.

Superannuations

Safalya Kumar Nandy, ALIO, retired on 31 January 2011. Among others who have retired from service between January and June 2011 are Sukriti Sarkar, ALIO, Sunil Kumar Biswas, ALIO, Minati Dutta, ALIO, Namita Basu, ALIO, Swapan Kumar Bose, Superintendent, Hiralal Prasad, Senior Assistant, Basudev Gupta, LIA, Ganesh Chandra Das, LIA, Ajoy Kumar Samanta, Assistant, Sukumar Sarkar, Library Clerk, Akhatar Hussain, Library Clerk, Susil Kumar Das, Head Guard, Panchu Pramanik, Chowdhury, Bhagaban Das Sonar and Fekulal Hela, Conservancy Staff. We wish them all a happy retired life.

Obituary

We sadly record the loss of three of our colleagues. Paritosh Das, Library Clerk, passed away on 14 January 2011. Birbar Nayak, member of the garden staff, died on 25 February 2011. Dilip Kumar Singha, Library Assistant, died on 25 April 2011. We wish to put on record our appreciation of their services and to convey our condolences to the bereaved families.

Estate

Structural Assessment of the Belvedere Palace

The Archaeological Survey of India is restoring the Belvedere Palace and will make part of it ready for the exhibition on 'Treasures of Ancient China' to be held in September 2011. Work on conservation, structural restoration and special repairs have been taken up, and a face-lift of the old façade is at an advanced stage of completion. On 7 February and 24 February 2011, Professor Arup Guha Niyogi of Jadavpur University and his team visited Belvedere House for a structural assessment of the building. Their report has been submitted to the ASI.

Report of the Committee for the Heritage Building

The Committee for the Heritage Building of the National Library has submitted to the Ministry the Detailed Project Report for the permanent collection, exhibition gallery and activity centre on language and its uses. The Committee held its last meeting on 24 March 2011, and its tenure came to an end on 31 March 2011.

Office of the Tagore National Fellow for Cultural Research

A new office fitted with a computer, printer, internet connection, intercom and telephone has been constructed on the second floor of the Bhasha Bhavan for the Tagore National Fellow for Cultural Research.

Trees in the National Library Campus

The National Library offers a calm and pollution-free environment to its users. The Belvedere campus owes such an environment chiefly to its grounds and its vegetation. The shade of the trees, and the beauty of their leaves and flowers have a lasting influence on all who visit the library. There are a few trees that probably date back to the origins of the city, and a few that are extremely rare in the region. The Garden Division, and its Superintendent, Dr Sukanta Biswas, has prepared notes on a few of these trees that are reproduced below.

Rare Trees in the Belvedere Campus of the National Library

Heritiera macrophylla

This is the *sundri* or *sundari* tree. It is gigantic in form and spreads over a large area, with roots that stand out from the ground forming narrow ridges or plank-like projections above the soil, and flat, narrow buttresses to the trunk. Its large, leathery, dark green leaves, glossy above but a beautifully silver below caused by a layer of minute shining scales, have caused Europeans to call it the 'looking glass tree'. The age of the tree in the library is difficult to ascertain. Before the birth of the city, the area was under salty water, and the *sundari* is evidence of that. It is possible that the tree grew or was planted sometime during the end of eighteenth century. The library has this one big specimen together with some younger ones.



In botanical terms, the tree is known as *Heritiera macrophylla*, belonging to the plant family *Sterculiaceae*. It is native to coastal India and was once found abundantly in the Sundarbans, along with the only other species *Heritiera fomes*. The tree is evergreen, and produces small unisexual flowers with pinkish calyx in the months of March-April.

Swietenia mahogany

The tree known as 'Spanish mahogany' in the Belvedere campus is not rare, but the tree is reminiscent of the early ties of Western residents with the nascent colonial town. Historians believe that the tree was planted during the period of Warren Hastings around 1760. The tree has its origin in tropical America or the West Indies with two species available in this country. The magnificent real Spanish mahogany are rare in Kolkata, and a few representative specimens may still be found in the Belvedere campus.



The botanical name of the tree is *Swietenia mahogany* of the plant family *Meliaceae*, commonly known as *mahogany* or *mahagni* or 'Spanish mahogany'. It is a small-leaved deciduous tree with sharp crown-like leaves, and greenish yellow flowers which adorn the tree along with new leaves in summer. The library has three such big specimens and a few newly planted ones. The other species is *Swietenia macrophylla*, large-leaved mahogany or 'bastard mahogany'. The timber of this species is lighter and less valuable than that of Spanish mahogany. It is a common species in Kolkata, and the library has some young specimens.

Elaeocarpus sphaericus (Syn. Elaeocarpus ganitrus)

The tree is commonly known as *rudraksha* while the English name is the *utrassum bead tree* or the 'bead tree of India'. A sacred and auspicious tree mentioned in the Indian religious scriptures, the tree belongs to the plant family '*Elaeocarpaceae*', a large family with 60 members. The species is said to be of Indian origin. The tree is abundantly found in Nepal up to 1200 metres. It produces bisexual small white flowers in the rainy season, and the fruits mature towards the end of the year. *Rudraksha* is the brown, uneven, round, warty seed of the tree, which is well known as beads. The library has a few specimens of young and semi-mature trees.

Pterygota alata 'Diversifolia'

This is a curious tree of which no two leaves are of the same shape or size. Because of this odd character, the tree is called 'mad tree'. The tree is the member of the plant family *Sterculiaceae* consisting of four members. This variety comes from the species *Pterigota alata*. The library has a good number of specimens, but only a single mad tree stands erect in front of the Annexe Building. The tree *alata* is a native of India, Bangladesh and Myanmar, but *diversifolia* possibly has its origin in Kolkata. A tall, deciduous tree, it has greenish purple or rusty brown flowers with an unpleasant smell that appear in February-March. With the onset of the flowers, the leaves start falling.



Ficus bengalensis 'Krishnae'

A popular belief is that the baby Krishna used to make a cup of its leaves to steal butter and curds and eat out of it. Since that time the trees put forth leaves which have their laminae joined at the base forming a shallow cup. This is the peculiarity of this tree. The English name of the tree is 'Krishna's butter cup'. Bengalis call it *Krishna bat*, a curious form of the common Indian tree *bat* or *bor* the leaves of which look like the ears of a cow. The tree is a member of the family *Moraceae*. It is a small tree with small reddish fruits that invite birds and other small animals. The library has only one such tree next to the Annexe Building.



Mesua ferrea

This tree is a native of India and Sri Lanka. *Mesua* is a sacred tree especially for Buddhists, and representations of deities have its flowers in their hands. The tree is known by different names as *nageshwari* or *nagkeshar* or *nagchampa*. In English it is called the 'iron wood'. The tree belongs to the plant family *Guttiferae*. It is a handsome looking tree, especially when it is adorned with brilliant new red leaves which gradually turn green. It is medium sized, conical, slow-growing, and evergreen, with white fragrant flowers that appear in February-March and stay for a very limited period. The flowers look like small magnolia when open. A graceful specimen of this kind can be seen in the near the Annexe Building.



Tagore and the Culture of the Book*

Arun Ghosh

One can reconstruct Rabindranath Tagore's early reading from references in *My Reminiscences* and the memoirs of his sister, Swarnakumari Devi. Some of the books he had then read stayed on with him. The Bengali *Ramayana* by Krittibas that circulated in the servants' quarters of the Jorasanko house had reached Tagore, and he would later recall how an elderly relation noticed him shedding tears over a sad scene in the book in the dim light of a late cloudy afternoon, and snatched 'the dog-eared book with a marble paper cover' away from him. When he had crossed forty, he must have retained memories of his reading of the *Ramayana* from those times, and those memories must have influenced his comment, in his introduction to Dineschandra Sen's *Ramayani katha*: 'It was not physical prowess, craving for victory, or the pomp of state, but the domestic values nurtured gently that has given the *Ramayana* its glory and triumph in the flow of tears of pity.'

In his boyhood, for a while at least, Tagore found books intimidating, in the sheer perfection of print, with the poetry appearing without deletion, without a sign of deliberation or self-doubt, without a sign of 'earthly weakness', conveying the sense that poetry could not be written by individual effort! He could cherish only those rare occasions when 'the teacher tried to bring a whiff of the south wind from beyond into the *pathamarusthali* (the desert of the text)'.

Tagore's connections with the book were multifarious, as an author himself, as well as editor, translator, collector, publisher, and as contributor of introductions to several books. While Amiya Chakraborty's contribution to *The Golden Book of Tagore* (1931), 'The Poet at Work', offered the first substantial view of the scope and range of Tagore's private collection of books, and his selections for the Visva-Bharati Library, covering subjects such as agriculture, natural sciences, co-operative practices and organization, theories and applications in several branches of science and technology, dictionaries and encyclopaedias, and calligraphy, besides literature and the other arts, it was left to the initiative of the late Sibnarayan Roy in his capacity as Director of Ravindra Bhavana to catalogue his collection (and reading in particular) in the continuing *Ravindra Bhavana Collection: Catalogue-in-Progress* (1982-). The catalogue features a volume of Heine's poetry in German, dating from 1885, and an English translation of Heine, published by George Bell in 1884 (both 'heavily marked on certain pages').

Focusing on three essays and a talk by Tagore on education and the role of the library from between 1892 and 1928, one can see Tagore's passionate concern with the need to make the book part of a richer and natural process of communication that would break the awe that books could create in the grim surroundings of a conventional library. The writing of the book and the access to the book were both matters of concern for Tagore, who in a 1901 piece in *Bangadarsan* on Joseph Joubert (a selection of his writings, in English translation, edited by Katharine Lyttelton, and published in 1898, was part of his personal collection), wrote: 'When writing imagine yourself in the presence of a select group of well educated people, but not addressing them.' These words could provide an insight into the approach that Tagore laid out for the Lokasiksha Granthamala in 1937, and the complementary Visvavidya Samgraha, the two parallel series of monographs in paperback that Tagore

published. For the two series he commissioned the foremost scholars of his time to make the books 'cherished by the distinguished', but 'suitable for the common people'. With his insistence on this balance of authoritative and reliable scholarship and simplicity as well as clarity of presentation, he warned students in a talk in 1905 against what he described as 'the superstition about the book' that drove scholars to 'valorize the book at the cost of those that it reflected / represented'. As he put it, 'It is not as if we do not read books on ethnography. But when after all our reading, we are not in the least interested in studying and understanding our Handi, Dome, Kaibarta and Bagdi neighbours, I can see how we nurture a superstition about the book.'

He makes a distinction between the *pandit* and the *vidvan*, between the self-conscious scholar and the genuine learner. In the *Post Office*, Amal pleads with his uncle, 'I'll fall at your feet, don't ask me to be a pandit.'

As a publisher, he laid out the distinctive style and calligraphic lettering for the covers of the Visva-Bharati publications, playing with great imagination with book sizes for books of different kinds. He had set up a dedicated band of collaborators for the process with P. C. Mahalanobis, Kisorimohan Santra, Charuchandra Bhattacharya, Kanai Samanta and Pulinbehari Sen. A stickler for spelling, punctuation and spacing, Tagore corrected the proofs for most of his books, and was the first to detect mistakes in the printed book. In a letter addressed to Pulinbehari Sen dated 27 October 1939, Tagore complains of a line missing in a proof for the poem 'Sabala', and suggests the insertion of a semicolon to give clarity to the sense.

There are instances of several talks that Tagore gave at libraries, and of course the historic address as Chairman of the Reception Committee at the All India Libraries Conference, read out on his behalf on 26 December 1928 at the Senate Hall by Hirendranath Dutta. When he describes the library (in his 1885 essay 'Library') as the site where 'there rings the song of the birth of light', one can find traces of the UNESCO declaration in 1946: 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.'

In the same seminal essay, he writes: 'Here the hearts of the living and the dead live like neighbours. Here the assertion and the protest share a common space. Here doubt and conviction, quest and discovery touch each other. Here the enduring and the transitory live in patience and peace with each other, none ignoring the other.' His words relate significantly to the 1949 UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, revised and amended in 1972 and 1994: 'Constructive participation and development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.'

Even as he expressed in this essay his reservations about the library where 'language remains silent, the flow is still, the immortal light of the human soul lies bound in paper in the chains of black letter', one cannot fail to notice that he uses the words 'library' and 'librarian' rather than 'granthagar' and 'granthagarik', though the latter were in common use already. Was there a hint there that he was looking forward to a more indigenous and naturally rooted *granthagar* of the future? One can see the same doubts and fears in a much later work, *The Organization of Libraries* (1963), in which National Professor S. R. Ranganathan says: 'The library has a very special limitation. It is a deposit of an abstract record of ideas,

divorced from the living voice, from the powerful or tender eyes, from the changing expression that may so subtly extend or modulate the meaning of words—in short from every means by which the incalculable influence of personality is transmitted.'

In his essay, 'Libraryir mukhya kartabya' (the chief responsibility of the library) written at the age of 67, he complains against the 'obsession with collection' that drives libraries to accumulate 'books that rarely come to use', and only serve to push the really worthwhile books 'to the corners'. It would be the obligation of the librarian, he insists, to exercise 'thought and labour' to make 'the library totally useful'. He closes with two highly significant points: 'It is not just the reader who makes the library, the library too makes the reader.' And then, 'a librarian must have a sense of the book (*granthabodh*)'. He cannot be merely a storekeeper.' After years of negotiations with books, Tagore could hit on the proactive role of the modern librarian that would make all the difference.

*This is an abridged translation of the address in Bengali delivered by Arun Ghosh at the National Library, Kolkata, on 4 June 2011.



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